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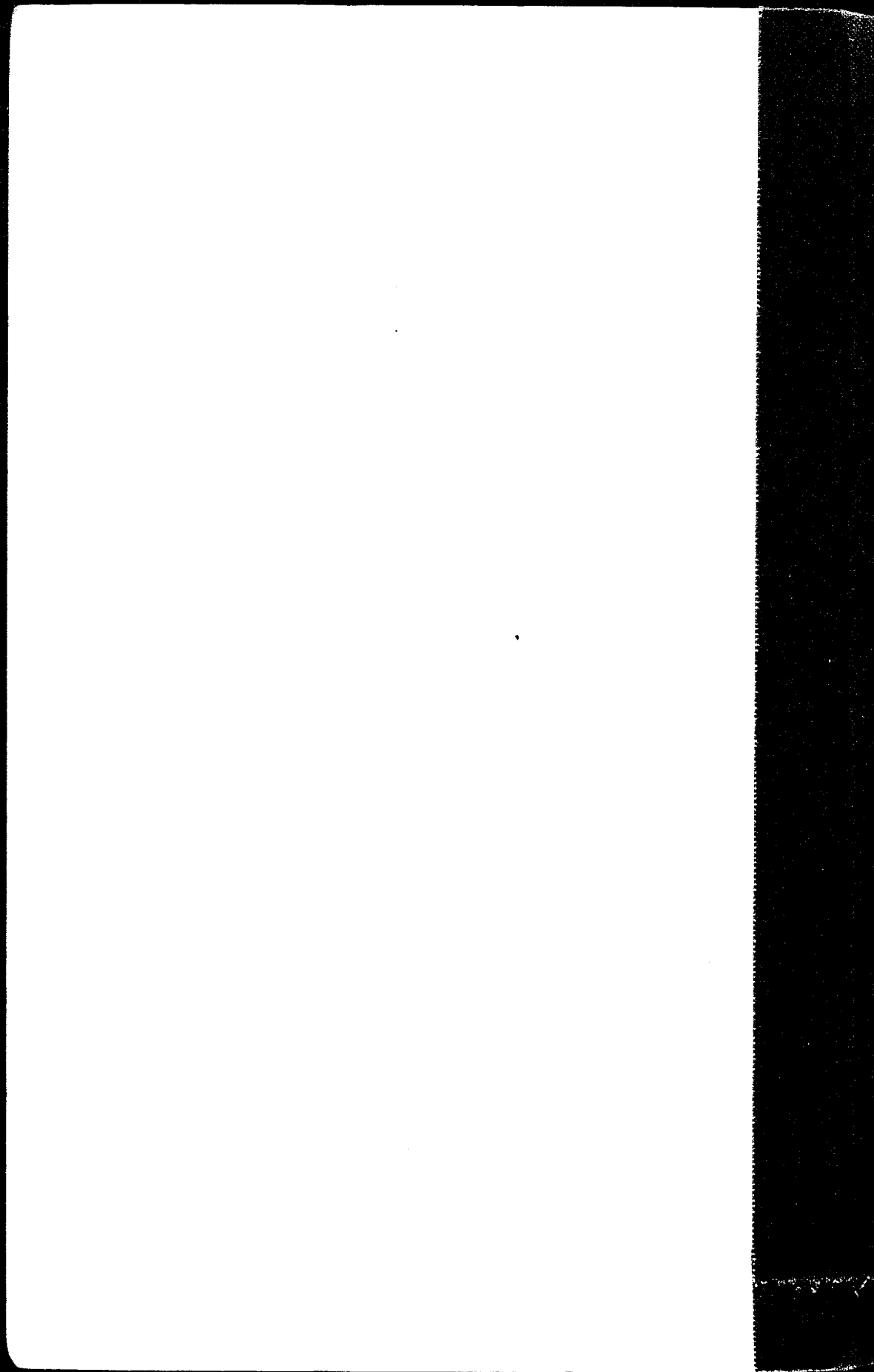
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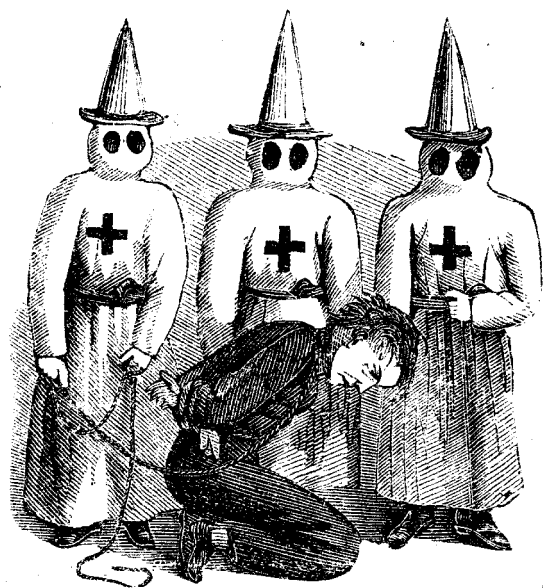
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EXPERIENCE

Among the Ku-Klux.



HARTFORD:
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.
1872.



EXPERIENCE

OF A NORTHERN MAN

Among the Ku-Klux;

OR THE

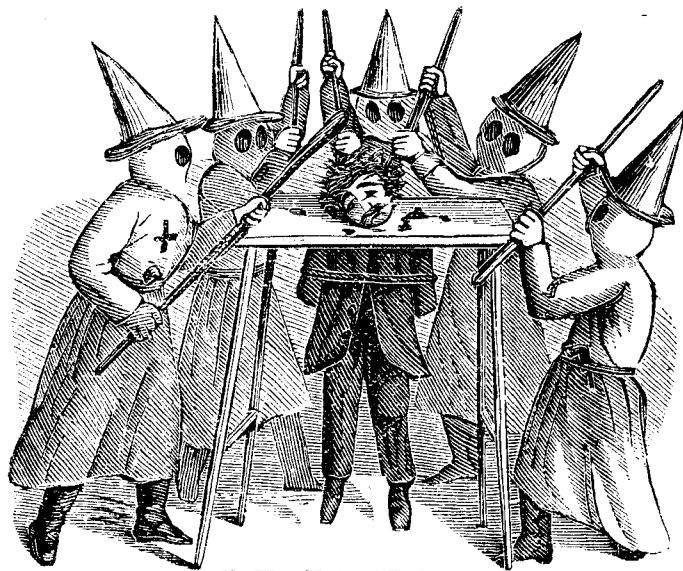
Condition of the South.

BY BENJAMIN BRYANT.

HARTFORD:
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.
1872.

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Ku-Klux Mode of Torture.

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PREFACE.

In order to better inform my readers of my intention for writing a book, I will say before entering into the main body of the work, that I have just returned from a long visit in the South, and have witnessed things which have occurred in the States late in Rebellion, and have kept a record of all, for the interest of the Northern people, and also, to give in detail the present situation of the people who are living there.

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Condition of the South.

As education is the great aim of every true American citizen, I will first inform you of its progress. The South has not had the advantages to aid in the development of education like the people of the North; but it has always been discouraged by the aristocracy of the South; and in so doing they have deprived the poor white people of education and other intelligences, as well as the black man. But they see that ignorance adds no credit to them, for in one of the courts recently held in North Carolina a financial case was before the court, and the jury was composed of half white and half black jurymen, and one out of the twelve jurymen just made out to understand the speeches made by

the counsels in behalf of their clients, and the influence of the one that could understand was not enough to control the determined minds that were contemplating the enthusiastic speeches of the lawyers, who so highly represented the words used by Webster. That it was impossible for one to understand the English language, put in its proper form, was something that they never had heard of before.

A great many freedmen are working on shares with their former masters, and are generally doing well, but are working for one-half, one-third, or one-fourth of their former pay, and are working under their master's hand, calling their former masters, "master," and denouncing the Proclamation of Emancipation. They hate that "old Northern woman" who is teaching the "nigger school," and resist all aid to free schools, and say, "I can live without education; I don't want it and will not have it."

"You are a good negro, and you may live on my land all your life-time."

That black man will work there for some time, and make one or two bales of cotton and give it to his master, as he calls him, to sell; and he will sell it and bring Tom, the good and smart negro, what he has a mind to.

Well, some day Tom will walk by the school-house and have a word or two with the teacher. Tom will tell him about his cotton. The teacher will say, "How much cotton did you have?"

"So much."

"How much money did you get?"

Tom says, "I got fifty dollars."

The school teacher will say, "Is that all? You should have more than that."

"How much more?"

"You should have twenty-five dollars more."

Tom says, "I am going to see him."

* * * *

"That is all that belongs to you, Tom. Who told you so?"

"What, sir?"

"That I did not give you all your money."

"The school teacher told me so."

"Who, that damn'd Yankee?"

"Yes sir."

"He told you that you could get more pay if you should go North, did he?"

"Yes sir. He told John, that black boy that lives with Mr. Brown, that he was free and should go to school. Yes, master, he told all the colored people to send their children and let them learn something."

"The idea of a white man telling the niggers to send their children to school."

"Where is he from?"

"Massachusetts."

"We will fix him," says Tom's master. "Hitch up my horse; I am going away."

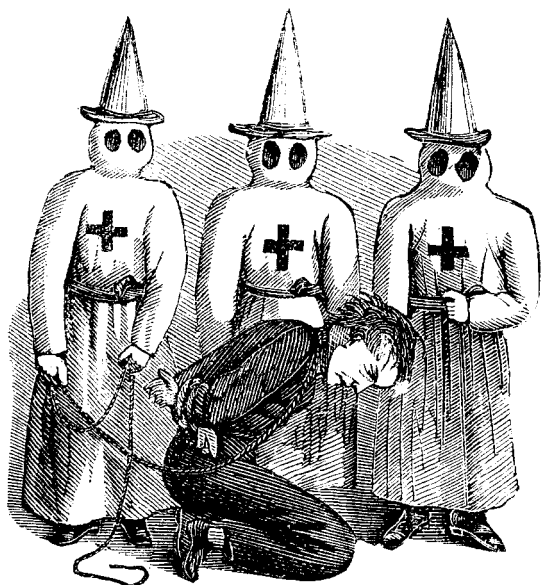
He will then go to the fork of the roads and tell everybody about what the damn'd Yankee school teacher told his niggers. If he stays here long he will have every nigger in the place think

that he is as good as a white man. Well, we must run him away. Send him word to leave by Monday. If not, we will fix him.

Monday has come—Tuesday has come. The nigger-school teacher has not gone yet. We must get together. [This is not talked in the presence of Tom, but Tom is in the next room and hears it all.]

“Tom, you go and tell Mr. Brown and Mr. Bond to come here, and on your way back go round by the Pugh Place and tell Mr. Pollock to come, too, and bring every one that he can.”

They will all meet and talk the matter over, and agree to meet on Wednesday night at 10 o'clock, all dressed in uniform, ready to commence their secret midnight demonstration. They went to his house and took him out, and tied a large rope round his neck, and he was seen down on his knees praying. But the party who saw him was a colored man (in the woods), and he says that he could go to the spot where he was hung,



"He was seen on his knees praying."

with his feet up, tied to the branch of an oak tree, and a log of wood round his neck, and his tongue from five to seven inches out of his mouth. This punishment will be applied to that class of Northern people who will go South and settle, and have not received full information how to act. You know it is an old saying, and a good one too, when you are in Rome, act as a Roman, and when you are in the South, you must act as a Southern man. What are these actions? First, I will say, you must act with the majority, let their actions be good or bad. You must denounce all free schools for white or black children. You must not come South and pay more for labor than the established price, which is all the way from five to ten dollars per month, but an extra good hand, who has always been farming, may in some cases get from fifteen to sixteen dollars per month. Never give a black man, or a poor white man who cannot read, any advice to post

themselves upon matters pertaining to their own welfare. Never speak a good word for New England, because her States demand human rights before the law, for all men. Never say anything about Bunker Hill, because that is in Massachusetts. Never express your political opinion, let it be Republican or Democratic, for we know that both parties wanted to maintain the Union. And, above all, you must hate niggers. There has been many a good enterprising Northern man driven from the newly established homestead because he did not know the existing circumstances. This organization, known as the "Invisible Empire," or Ku-Klux, does exist in the Southern States. There is a number of Northern people in both of the political parties that have manifested a strong unbelief in regard to the Ku-Klux Klans, but I will say a word on a verified fact, and truth, which is to-day being witnessed by every peace-loving and upright citizen. Now believe

me, please, for every word that I will say in the following statements is an experienced fact.

First, I will tell where these unlawful organizations mostly exist. They are in the southwest part of North Carolina—east of Mississippi, while their headquarters are in South Carolina. So that they include the State at large and the northern parts of Georgia and Alabama. Now what are the duties that they are compelled to perform by a sworn oath, which is taken before they have any consultation with any member upon the subject of membership? That organization is composed of ex-officers of the rebel army—such as Generals, Colonels, and Captains. These are the leaders. This organization is formed the same as an army, and the common members are compelled to obey the orders of the officers as a soldier in the army, or any military organization is obliged to do. And they have committed crimes of this and many other kinds unwitnessed by

any recorder, but him that looks on this movement with a perpetual eye of sagacity, and sees the works of the unjust as well as the just, and will render a verdict that is pre-eminent to any that man can render. They meet as I have above stated to you; and in meeting they have some secret word to identify their membership when they are in mass. There was one in Ashville county, N. C., that forgot the secret, and the laws of the Ku-Klux organization provides that if any member forgets the secret he shall be punished. This one was tied to an oak tree and stayed there one day and a half, and some colored men were walking in the woods and heard his crys, and went to him and untied him; and then he told them the whole story. The colored people and white people, that were opposed to Ku-Kluxism, then took him to Raleigh, and there he got a hearing before the federal court. He said if the court would let him free he would give full informa-

tion about the Ku-Klux, and his freedom was granted under those circumstances. And he went on to tell the intentions.

"First," he says, "the intention is to keep the negro down, and always make the darkies stand in the fear of their masters, as they did before emancipation. We must do all that we can to aid each other in keeping black men down, and never give them any information in regard to the political condition of the country, or market prices, or any information that will tend to promote their welfare. We are not to aid a carpet-bagger in getting an office. We are to do all that we can in making hazards for Northern emigrants."

He also told how many had been killed to his own knowledge, and how they were killed—some having been burnt and some hung; some had been drowned, and others killed, some one way and some another. These are some of the styles of punishment inflicted.

This organization would have spread into all of the Southern States, and been at its highest ebb of mischief, had it not been for the timely efforts of the Ku-Klux Congressional Investigating Committee to suppress the evil. And from the description and directions given by the above-mentioned person, inside of two weeks the federal court was enabled to secure, try, and sentence to imprisonment twenty-three of the offenders. If there is any one that is an unbeliever in regard to the existing Ku-Klux organization in the South, let him go to the State Prisons of some of those States. In Robertson county, N. C., and many others, in consequence of the outlaws existing there, there has not been a vote cast since the war, because the voters stand in fear of the outrages made upon them by these Ku-Klux. The lawyers who plead the cases of the unjust, as well as the just, are oft-times compelled to skip and dodge the points of law because they often fear the vengeance of

these organizations. They keep away emigration and capital, which is needed in the South more than anything at this time.

The North Carolina Legislature has brought an action against Gov. Holden because he ordered the arrest of Ku-Klux wherever they should be found, and consequently he suspended the writ of *habeas corpus*. The Legislature said it was an act of unconstitutionality to the State. It was not only detrimental to the government, but it was unconstitutional to the Ku-Klux. It was afterwards found that twenty members of the Legislature were members of the Ku-Klux organization. They were found out by their demanding amnesty for Ku-Klux prisoners.

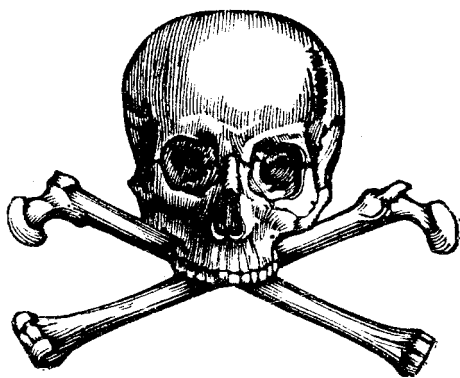
Whenever one of those rebel Generals makes a speech, he always speaks of the lost cause as if they would conquer at some coming day. Of this they speak with confidence that they will regain the lost cause. The farms are declining and

growing up into woodland, principally pine. Money is wanted very much in the South, and the South will never rise from her depressed condition until people, especially capitalists, will go and settle there and maintain peace.

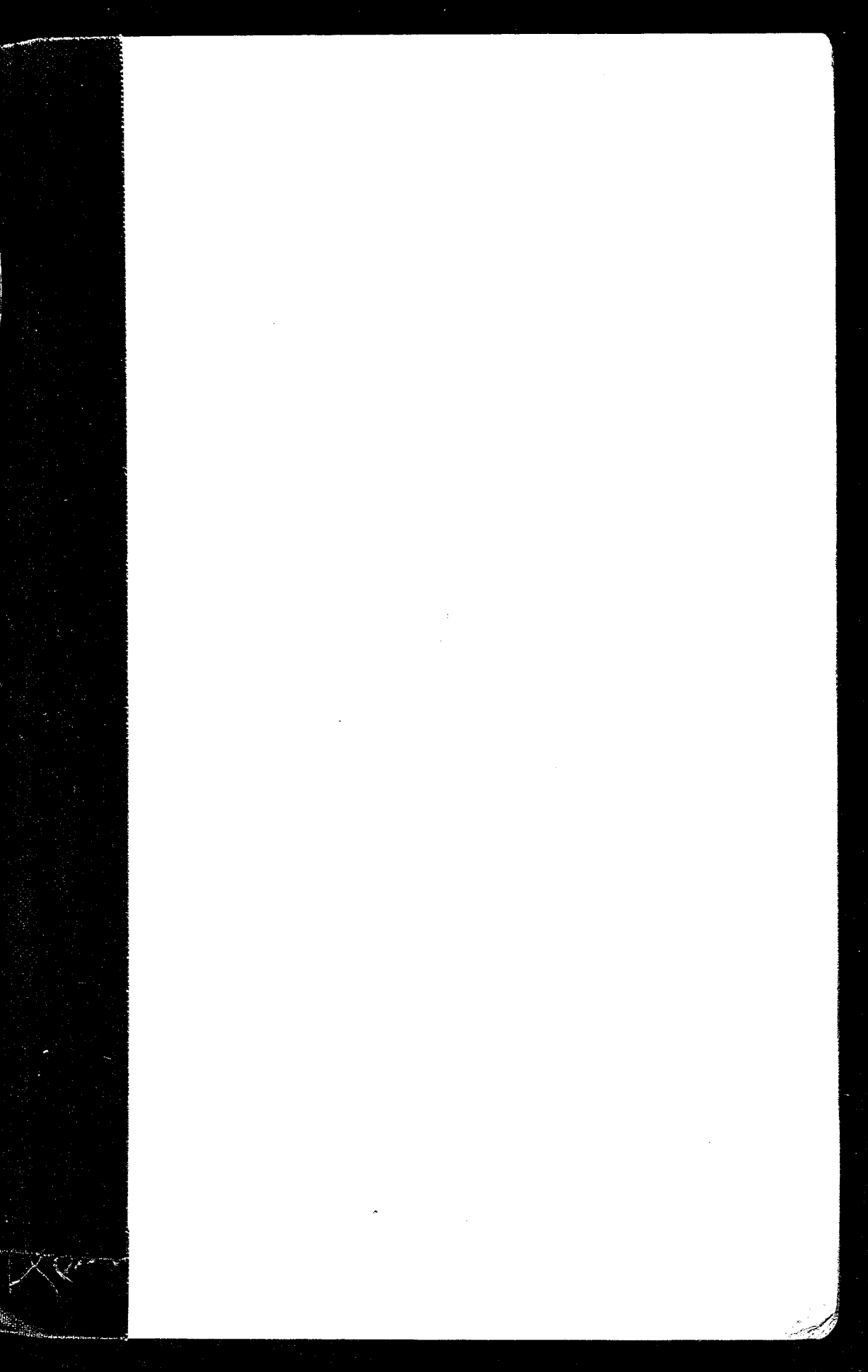
No one can tell the crimes that are committed upon the loyal people of the South, but one who has witnessed them all. A word in regard to the outlaws in Robertson County, N. C. The Lowereys and their kin were superior in handicraft, personal bearing, and beauty, to their yellow neighbors, and were formerly prosperous slaveholders. In 1835 the free blacks of North Carolina were deprived of the political and judicial rights then granted to the whites. They were driven to the woods by the whites before the war. You know the white people of the South never did like free colored people; and they had been treated so unkind by the white people before the war that they were obliged

to resort to the woods so long as to become uncivilized.

Hoping that at some future day I can bring better news from the land of corruption and poverty, I will bring this little book to a close.



Insigna of the Ku-Klux.



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